



Information session for librarians: Tenure at McGill, 2011

Professor Anthony C. Masi
Provost
1 February 2011



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Tenure: rationale

- Tenure for librarians:
 - Fair and proper procedures for evaluation on relevant criteria
 - Librarianship, professional contributions, service, scholarship, other
 - Academic freedom as pertinent
 - Certain degree of economic security
- Academics with tenure should be terminated
 - only for 'cause'
 - following fair and proper procedures
 - (in narrow circumstances) for demonstrably bona fide financial exigency

Privileges of Tenure

- Academic freedom
- Economic security
- Involvement in university life and decision-making
- Institutional support

Responsibilities of Tenure

- Professionalism in librarianship
- Teaching or other contributions to instruction
- Service
- Scholarship, research, other contributions to librarian activities

Expectation after tenure is awarded

- “A member of the academic staff who is granted tenure shall maintain the high standards for which it was granted”
 - [5.59 /3.59, Regulations Relating to the Employment of Academic/Librarian Staff]

How the Tenure Process Works: Initial Steps

- First-line quality assurance measures: solid hiring and re-appointment procedures
- Statement of expectations regarding teaching, research and service
- Written criteria
- A timetable
- Several levels of internal review

How the Tenure Process Works: Evaluation (1 of 2)

- Candid evaluation, willingness to take hard decisions, personal investment in a sound institutional process
- Sense of fairness and justice to both individual and institutional interests
- Denial of tenure as a last resort (but could reflect on inadequate quality assurance measures)

How the Tenure Process Works: Evaluation (1 of 2)

- The health of the tenure system rests on sound evaluations of tenure-track faculty
- Sound evaluations also leads to the fairest and most defensible outcomes
- By engaging in constructive dialogue during faculty-evaluation sessions we can avoid problems

Tenure Decisions (1 of 2)

- **Based on performance, not promise:**
 - “A candidate is ... **judged principally on performance, rather than promise**”
- **Relevant period of performance:**
 - “the relevant period is the aggregate **period of the candidate’s tenure track appointment** duties performed prior to that time ... explain the appointment [to tenure track] but ... do not support grant of tenure”
 - Publications prior to McGill “are not relevant to the performance ... of ... academic duties at McGill and ought therefore not to be factored in ...”
- **Exceptions:**
 - Hires with tenure
 - Early tenure consideration

Tenure Decisions (2 of 2)

- **Pre-tenure-track performance** does not offset inadequate **tenure-track** performance
- **Whole record** during tenure-track period is relevant
- No **overflow** of merit or demerit from one category to another
- No “**double counting**” of achievements
- **Comparison group**: not necessarily a candidate’s own unit or another unit in the University (thus, use of external evaluators)

The Bottom Line

- Granting tenure is the **most important decision** we make at McGill
- Tenure decisions **define the Faculty or the Library**
- The tenured professoriate and librarians **define the University**
- Department Tenure Committees (DTC) must **resist any tendency to defer hard judgements** to the campus-wide University Tenure Committee (UTC) or administrative authority (the Provost and/or the Principal) or to governance procedures (Appeals Committee)

Questions for Reflection

- *Does this person's teaching, scholarship, and service reflect the established criteria on the three dimensions of academic duties for the Department, the Faculty, and the University?*
- *Can this person and his/her work be taken as "representative" of the high standards of McGill University?*
- *Will this tenure decision be good for the Department, the Faculty, and the University?*

Conclusions: Striving for Excellence

- There is always room for improvement in the tenure process.
- We are constantly working to strengthen evaluation **procedures** and the nature of **deliberations** at all stages.



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Comments?

Questions?

Suggestions?

Feedback?